



GOC Care

Aged • Disability • Community

Greek Cultural Information for Culturally Appropriate Care



Greek name Days

Name Days or Saint Days are the feast day of a saint who an individual is named after. Name days are important to older Greeks. A person's actual birthday could pass without much notice, but his/her Name Day is celebrated traditionally with a party, giving of small gifts and perhaps attendance at Church.

Shared special days

This listing is not intended to be exhaustive; rather it lists the major shared 'special days'. You should check with the person or his/her family if there are other special days that are important to that person.

Festivity	Date	Customary Practises
New Year's Day	1 January	<p>The Feast of St Basil is associated with a good start for the new year.</p> <p>An old Byzantine custom of slicing the <i>Vassilopita</i> (St. Basil's cake or New Year Cake) gives the person who finds the hidden coin in his slice, good luck for the year.</p>
Epiphany Day	6 January	<p>Epiphany (when John the Baptist baptized Jesus in the river Jordan) is celebrated throughout Greece when the Blessing of the Waters takes place. A cross is thrown into the sea, lakes or rivers and retrieved by swimmers who are then entitled to good luck.</p>
The Annunciation and Greek National Independence Day	25 March	<p>This day has dual significance for Greek people. Firstly, it celebrates the Annunciation when Mary was visited by the Archangel Gabriel and told she will conceive the Son of God.</p> <p>Secondly, it is the formal proclamation of the Greek War of Independence against Turkish rule on 25th March, 1821.</p>

May Day	1 May	May Day and the Feast of the Flowers in Greece. This is a celebration of Spring and rebirth. Celebrations include maypole dancing, country picnics and kite flying.
Orthodox Clean Monday		Clena Monday is the commencement of fasting, although not all Greek people fast, especially if they are frail and old, pregnant, very young or sick.
Orthodox Good Friday		Greek families are likely to take a resident home during the Easter period. NO MEAT is consumed on Good Friday.
Orthodox Easter Sunday		Easter Sunday (Pascha) is the biggest church holiday in Greece. After Church families usually gather for a festive lunch. Red eggs are cracked against each other and the person with the last remaining uncracked egg is believed to have good luck all year.
The Dormition of the Virgin Mary	15 August	The day of the Panagia (Virgin Mary) is the second biggest religious holiday after Easter, celebrated on 15 August after two weeks of lent.
Greek national Day	28 October	The 28 th of October is known by the Greeks as OHI Day, celebrating the Greek refusal to let Italy occupy the country during WWII. The Italians invaded and were driven back into Albania. There are military parades in the major towns and cities
Christmas Day	25 December	Some Greeks may fast (no eating meat) for 40 days before Christmas. The Christmas meal is usually roast pork, vegetables, salads and cake.
Boxing Day	26 December	Usually a day for picnics.

Important Dates for Greek Orthodox Easter 2015

15th February: Meat-fare Sunday

22th February: Cheese-fare/ Forgiveness Sunday

23th February: Clean Monday – Great Lent begins

5th April: Palm Sunday

6th April: Holy Monday

7th April: Holy Tuesday

8th April: Holy Wednesday

9th April: Holy Thursday – The Last Supper

10th April: Holy Friday – The Holy Passion of our Lord (Good Friday)

11th April: Holy Saturday

12th April: Holy Pascha (Easter Sunday – Resurrection of Jesus Christ)



Religion:

Understanding the Greek Orthodox Faith and religious values will assist in understanding clients' behaviours, attitudes and beliefs and deliver care that shows regard and respect

- The Greek Orthodox Faith is the dominate religion. The Church is more than just a place worship but also the centre of cultural activities for the local Greek community.
- Fasting is an essential part of Orthodoxy
- Easter and Christmas are particularly important religious celebrations when most people fast
- Greek Name Days are of particular importance and more than often are more celebrated than birthdays

Food:

For most Greek's, eating is a social experience, not just a means of satisfying hunger. Meal times provide the opportunity for family and friends to come together. Most Greek people take great pride in cooking.

Family Structure:

Understanding dynamics within the family are important as values, attitudes and beliefs are influenced and moulded through the family unit

- Traditionally the male is the head of the house hold and historically families were large
- Placing a loved one into an aged care facility is often the last resort and may precipitate feelings of guilt, shame and anxiety amongst family members.

Interacting and Communicating with Greek- Speaking older people:

Naturally Greeks communicate in expressive and demonstrative ways. Expressing ones emotion and feeling in gestures is acceptable and encouraged.

There are 4 factors to take into consideration:

1. Body Language
2. Gestures
3. Facial Expressions
4. Tone of Voice

It is courteous to say 'Yiassou' (Hello) when entering a room, otherwise people could take offence. Most Greeks prefer the use of titles e.g. Mr (keerio) and Mrs (Keeria). It is a matter of respect to call an elder 'Aunty' (thea) or 'Uncle' (theo) when you know them well.

Health:

There is a General stigma associated with mental, psychiatric and physical illness. Illness is viewed as a sign of weakness and could be seen by some as a form of punishment for wrong doings throughout their lifetime. There is a sense of loss and dignity associated with having an illness. It is important for older Greek people to have an open and trusting relationship with their Doctor.

Expectations of Greek-Speaking People of a Residential Facility

- Staff who can speak Greek / staff make an effort to understand person's culture and language
- Links with priests and church
- Family, community atmosphere
- Welcome family visits at any time for example, at meals times and on special events such as Greek National Days, Religious feasts etc.
- Other Greek residents for company / able to communicate with others in same language
- Regular access to Greek food
- Stimulating activities (eg. crafts, gardening, bus trips, visits from children's groups, etc.)
- Activities from their own culture (eg. Backgammon and card games)
- Activities that consider people's interests, hobbies and skills (residents asked what they like, dislike, cultural needs, hobbies etc.)
- Personalised private room
- Warmth and respect shown to residents by staff
- Happy, communicative staff
- Staff acknowledging individuals' traits, routines and needs
- Location easily accessible to family
- Staff/management responsive to concerns
- A clean and safe facility
- Greek TV- SBS regularly forecasts the Greek news and some Greek movies
- Antenna on cable TV is the most commonly viewed Greek channel

Useful Websites

AGED CARE INFORMATION

My Aged Care Website

<http://www.myagedcare.gov.au/>

COTA (Council of the Ageing)

<http://www.cota.org.au/australia/>

Alzheimer's Australia Website

<https://fightdementia.org.au/>

RELIGION

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia

www.greekorthodox.org.au

Greek Orthodox Community of St George, Brisbane, Qld

www.gocstgeorge.com.au

Greek Orthodox Church of St Anna, Bundall, Qld.

www.gocstanna.org

CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE CARE

GOC Care Website

<http://goccare.com.au/>

Fronitha Care: Greek Care

www.greekcare.org.au

Australian Greek Welfare Society

www.agws.com.au

GREEK GAMES

www.geocities.com/thanoscardgames

FOOD

A Guide to Greek Food- Information

<http://www.greecefoods.com/>

Greek Food Recipes

<http://www.ellada.com/grarr15.html>